



City of Westport

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June 23, 2011

Washington State Redistricting Commission
P.O. Box 40498
Olympia, WA 98504-0948

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BY:

RE: Comments for Consideration by Commission

Dear Commission Members:

As Mayor of the City of Westport, I am providing these written comments for your consideration in developing a final redistricting plan. I was not able to attend the public forum held in Aberdeen on May 17, but my city administrator was and made comments on my behalf. The following written comments expand on the points made by many at that same meeting.

I want to recognize the work on behalf of the City of our Congressman, Norm Dicks. I know you heard that loud and clear at the forum, and while it might be easy to ignore these statements as being politically motivated, they are, at least from my perspective not. They are actually very practical and your decision in this area will have a major impact on the City of Westport. There are several critical issues facing Westport for which Congressman Dicks has become a key figure in representing our interests. Some of these include coastal erosion, the Grays Harbor Navigation Project, and our fishing and yacht building industries. While few of these issues are significant from a national perspective, they are critical to our continued sustainability and Congressman Dicks understands that. We have been able to work effectively with the Corps of Engineers since there was a breach at the South Jetty in 1993. Without Congressman Dick's assistance, we would not have been able to keep the Corps engaged on our issues.

As was stated at the forum, the decisions of the redistricting plan will potentially last long after Congressman Dicks has retired. Although that could lead the commission to discount or ignore the above comments, I strongly request that you not do so. Because of Congressman Dick's effectiveness, strong local and regional cooperative relationships have developed that I believe may be lost if we were moved into another district.

I am requesting the commission not remove the City from the Third Congressional District. The City fits well within the current district, which includes the north and central coasts of Washington, from many aspects including economic, social, and cultural. I do not see the same connections with the southern Cities in Pacific County or most cities in

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Thurston County. The City of Westport is a small coastal community that depends heavily on natural resources for our livelihood. Our largest employer, Westport Shipyard has facilities in Hoquiam and Port Angeles which are all in the district. Moving us to another district would lessen the benefit of having one congressman representing them on all issues. We are also within the Seattle District of the Corps of Engineers. The third congressional district is primarily within the Portland District of the Corps. Having a representative who is working with corps staff continually on issues throughout the district provides a significant amount of opportunity for discussion and monitoring progress on projects that would be lost to us. Coastal erosion issues for the City require both funding and legal authority which has required both the Corps and Congressman Dick's efforts to accomplish. Our problems are very small issues in terms of significance with the Corps, but because of Congressman Dick's efforts we have been very successful. I am very concerned that if we were moved to the third or into a new tenth district that included Olympia we would become lost in the larger focus on the Columbia River and the flooding along Interstate 5 that those communities are focused on. The same would be true economically and culturally. It makes sense to me that if a new tenth district is going to be formed around Thurston County, it should include communities surrounding that area that have a connection to it and the I-5 corridor.

I would also request the City remain in the 19th Legislative District. There are two primary reasons for this request. While splitting counties is not considered desirable, in our situation it has been very beneficial. Again, because of the strong cooperative efforts among the jurisdictions of the county, we have worked together with the legislators of all three districts that represent Grays Harbor County and accomplished much more than we would have with a single set of representatives for our county. We also share similar issues with the cities of northern Pacific County that are similar in size and economies. The second reason is the natural break created by Grays Harbor. You can drive to and from both of our current representative's offices in the time it takes to drive to Ocean Shores. I see that both the 24th and 19th districts are below the target population with the 19th significantly lower than the 24th; therefore it would make sense to leave us in the 19th.

Finally, I want to recognize the state for the excellent public participation process that has been including in the development of the plan. I also want to thank you for accepting and considering these comments as you proceed through the task that is ahead of you. I would be glad to clarify any of my comments if that would assist you in this process. Feel free to contact me.

Sincerely



Michael Bruce
Mayor

Cc: City Council